

Serial No.: 09/992,071

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

- 1 1 (Currently Amended). A decoding apparatus providing decoding protection
2 with a video data encoding method using a DCT (Discrete Cosine Transform) method
3 of an MPEG algorithm, for operating on information which is transferred through a
4 medium and comprises main data which are to be decoded, the apparatus comprising:
5 means for detecting medium protection data which are also transferred through
6 said medium;
7 means for limiting ~~reproduction~~ decoding based upon at least a film
8 classification system;
9 means for generating apparatus protection data which comprise at least first
10 apparatus protection data and second apparatus protection data,
11 wherein said first apparatus protection data are specific to a region or a country
12 in which said decoding apparatus is to be used, said first apparatus protection data
13 [[being']] being fixed and unmodifiable by a user of said decoding apparatus and said
14 second apparatus protection data being modifiable by the user to selectively define a
15 plurality of protection levels including at least two levels which are respectively
16 specific to adults and to children;
17 means for defining a protection level based on said medium protection data and
18 on said apparatus protection data, in combination; and

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19 means for executing decoding of said main data in accordance with said
20 protection level,
21 wherein the combination of said medium protection data and said first apparatus
22 protection data specifies that said main data are decoded either in their entirety or not
23 at all, and the combination of said medium protection data and said second apparatus
24 protection data specifies that said main data are decoded in their entirety, partially, or
25 not at all,
26 wherein said data medium transfers both said medium protection data and said
27 main data in an identical form.

1 2 (Original). A decoding apparatus as recited in claim 1, wherein said means for
2 executing operates in response to said combination of said medium protection data
3 with said first apparatus protection data to cause said decoding apparatus to decode
4 said main data either in their entirety or not at all,
5 said means for executing operating in response to said combination of said
6 medium protection data and said second apparatus protection data to cause said
7 decoding apparatus to decode said main data in their entirety, partially, or not at all.